

Message Text

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ACTION ARA-20

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 NEA-10 IO-14 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-07 H-03

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R 222135Z APR 74

FM AMEMBASSY SANTIAGO

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 8293

INFO AMEMBASSY BRASILIA

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: SOCI, CI

SUBJ: STATUS REPORT ON CHILEAN JEWISH COMMUNITY

REF: STATE 079784

1. SUMMARY. CHILEAN JEWISH COMMUNITY PLEASED WITH CURRENT MILITARY GOVERNMENT AND ADAMANT IN ITS REFUTATION OF REPORTS CIRCULATING ABROAD OF GOC-FOMENTED ANTI-SEMITIC DISCRIMINATION. END SUMMARY.

2. CHILEAN JEWISH COMMUNITY NUMBERS APPROXIMATELY 25,000 TO 30,000 WITH MAJORITY LIVING IN SANTIAGO AREA. SMALLER COLONIES LOCATED IN VALPARAISO/VINA DEL MAR (3,000) AND CONCEPCION (1,000).

3. ACCORDING TO SOURCES IN COMMUNITY, APPROXIMATELY 5,000 JEWS LEFT CHILE DURING ALLENDE YEARS. EXODUS WAS RESULT OF ALLENDE GOVT ECONOMIC POLICIES WHICH HIT HARDEST AT PROFESSIONAL AND ENTREPRENEURIAL GROUPS. MANY HAVE RETURNED TO CHILE SINCE SEPTEMBER MILITARY COUP. THERE WAS NO ANTI-SEMITISM FOMENTED OR DONDONED BY ALLENDE GOVERNMENT. JEWISH LEADERS ENERGETICALLY STATE THAT THIS POLICY CONTINUES UNDER PRESENT GOVERNMENT.

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4. JEWISH COMMUNITY GENERALLY COMPOSED OF SECOND AND THIRD

GENERATION CHILEAN CITIZENS WELL ASSIMILATED INTO MIDDLE AND UPPER CLASSES, THOUGH LATENT ANTI-SEMITISM EXISTS IN CHILE AS IN ALL WESTERN COUNTRIES. RELATIONS WITH NUMERICALLY MORE POWERFUL COMMUNITY OF ARAB DESCENT (ESTIMATED AT 300,000) HAVE GENERALLY BEEN AMICABLE THOUGH TRADITIONALLY MARKED BY TENSIONS ARISING MORE FROM COMMERCIAL COMPETITION THAN FROM RELIGIOUS OR SOCIAL DIFFERENCES. DURING ALLENDE YEARS SOME ARAB EMBASSIES AND ARAB LEAGUE GENERATED ANTI-ISRAEL PROPAGANDA. HOWEVER, THIS NEVER TRANSLATED INTO SERIOUS ATTACK ON LOCAL JEWISH COMMUNITY WHICH REMAINED OPENLY AND VOCIFEROUSLY ZIONIST.

5. ACCORDING TO CHIEF RABBI OF CHILE APPROXIMATELY 400 JEWS OR NON-PROACTING CHILDREN OF JEWISH FAMILIES HELD MEDIUM TO HIGH LEVEL POSITIONS IN ALLENDE GOVERNMENT. MANY HAVE BEEN DISMISSED FROM JOBS OR HAVE HAD TO LEAVE COUNTRY. RABBI QUICK TO NOTE THAT REASONS FOR DISMISSAL OR DEPARTURE POLITICAL IN NATURE AND IN NO WAY RELATED TO ANTI-SEMITISM.

6. CURRENT COMPOSITION OF GOVERNMENT PLACES MILITARY MEN IN MOST KEY POSITIONS. AS MILITARY CAREER NOT ONE WHICH TRADITIONALLY ATTRACTED CHILEAN JEWISH YOUTHS, NUMBER OF JEWS IN HIGH LEVEL POSITIONS HAS DIMINISHED. GENERAL JOSE BERDICHEWSKY VIEWED BY INFORMED SOURCES AS THIRD MOST POWERFUL MAN IN AIR FORCE AND IN CHARGE OF ALL AIR FORCE OPERATIONS IS PERHAPS HIGHEST RANKING JEW CURRENTLY IN POSITION OF POWER.

7.COMMENT. LOCAL JEWISH COMMUNITY LEADERS HAVE BEEN EMPHATIC IN THEIR CONVERSATIONS WITH EMBASSY OFFICERS IN THEIR EFFORT TO DISPEL RUMORS CIRCULATING ABROAD OF ANTI-SEMITIC ATTITUDE OR ACTIONS ON PART OF MILITARY GOVERNMENT. THEY NOTE THAT RELATIONS WITH GOVERNMENT ARE EXCELLENT AND THAT "95 PERCENT OF JEWISH COMMUNITY" AVIDLY PRO-JUNTA. THEY ADD THAT GOVERNMENT HAS MADE SEVERAL SYMBOLIC GESTURES SUCH AS PRESENCE AT HIGH HOLY DAY SERVICES OF AIDES-DE-CAMP OF JUNTA MEMBERS TO PUBLICLY DEMONSTRATE ITS EXCELLENT RELATIONS WITH COMMUNITY. EMBASSY AGREES WITH JEWISH LEADERS' VIEWS. THERE IS AT THIS TIME NO POLICY OR INTIMATION OF POLICY OF ANTI-SEMITIC DISCRIMINATION ON THE PART OF GOC.

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